ABSTRACT

Poverty is a multidimensional and global phenomenon that affects populations differently, with rural communities often experiencing greater intensity and vulnerability than urban areas. In Nigeria, poverty is more pervasive in rural settings due to structural inequalities and limited access to socio-economic opportunities. Against this backdrop, this study examined poverty and the plight of the rural populace in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State, with particular focus on the nature, trends, and causes of poverty in the area. The study was anchored on Marxist Class Theory, which explains poverty as a consequence of unequal ownership and control of productive resources. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to ensure methodological triangulation. Data were generated through the administration of 170 structured questionnaires and the conduct of five in-depth interviews, while a multi-stage sampling technique was used to select respondents. The findings revealed that inadequate basic social amenities constituted the most critical challenge facing the study area. Poverty was primarily attributed to educational deficiencies, unemployment, widespread illiteracy, low agricultural productivity resulting from land infertility, and deprivation of essential social services. The study further found that poverty manifested in malnutrition and starvation, high prevalence of infectious diseases, homelessness, and engagement in prostitution, among other adverse outcomes. The study therefore recommended employment generation, universal access to quality education, establishment of vocational and skills acquisition centers, and improved provision of basic infrastructure such as potable water and good road networks. It also emphasized the need for inclusive governance that promotes the participation of the poor in decision-making processes, as well as economic diversification, as critical strategies for reducing poverty in the study area.

Keywords: Poverty, plights, rural populace, urban poverty, nature and trend.

Introduction

Poverty remains a persistent global development challenge, with rural areas disproportionately affected due to deprivation, marginalization, and vulnerability. Despite abundant natural and human resources, rural communities often face limited access to basic social services such as quality education, healthcare, potable water, sanitation, electricity, and adequate housing. Poor infrastructure, low income opportunities, and weak institutional support reinforce cycles of poverty, undermining human development and social wellbeing (World Bank, 2022). In sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, rural poverty is shaped by structural and historical factors, such as unequal land distribution, agrarian stagnation, and neglect in national development policies. Most rural households depend on subsistence agriculture with low productivity, limited access to modern technology, markets, and credit facilities, while environmental degradation, climate variability, and insecurity further exacerbate livelihoods (FAO, IFAD, & UNICEF, 2023).

Poverty in rural areas extends beyond material deprivation to affect social inclusion, dignity, and human capabilities. The rural poor frequently experience political marginalization, limited participation in decision-making, and social exclusion, with women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities being particularly vulnerable (UNDP, 2023). These vulnerabilities contribute to poor health outcomes, low educational attainment, high dependency ratios, and increased rural–urban migration, which further depletes productive labor in rural communities. Addressing rural poverty requires a multidimensional approach that captures deprivations in living standards, opportunities, and social empowerment, forming the basis for inclusive development policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities) (United Nations, 2015).

In Nigeria, poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon affecting millions, defined by inadequate access to income, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Over 40% of Nigerians live below the national poverty line, highlighting the urgency of poverty alleviation (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The majority of citizens cannot afford basic necessities such as food and education, and economic, social, political, and environmental factors collectively reinforce deprivation (Chinwe et al., 2022; World Poverty Clock, 2018; Adebayo, 2018; Aderemi et al., 2020). Given this context, this study focuses on poverty and the plights of the rural populace in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State, examining its causes, manifestations, and implications for rural development.

Statement of the Research Problem

Poverty remains one of the most persistent development challenges confronting societies worldwide, with its incidence and severity disproportionately concentrated in rural areas. Despite the abundant natural and human resources in many rural communities, these populations continue to experience deprivation, marginalization, and vulnerability. In rural Nigeria, the plights of the populace are reflected in limited access to basic social services such as quality education, healthcare, potable water, sanitation, electricity, and adequate housing, alongside poor infrastructure, low-income opportunities, and weak institutional support. These conditions perpetuate cycles of poverty that undermine human development and social wellbeing (World Bank, 2022).

In developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, rural poverty is closely linked to structural and historical factors, including unequal land distribution, agrarian stagnation, and neglect of rural development in national policies. Most rural households depend on subsistence agriculture characterized by low productivity, limited access to modern technology, markets, and credit facilities. Environmental degradation, climate variability, and insecurity further exacerbate rural livelihoods,

increasing vulnerability to food insecurity and economic shocks (FAO, IFAD, & UNICEF, 2023). Consequently, rural populations are often trapped in chronic poverty with limited capacity to diversify income or accumulate assets.

Beyond material deprivation, rural poverty has multidimensional implications for social inclusion, human capabilities, and dignity. Rural residents frequently experience political marginalization, social exclusion, and limited participation in decision-making processes. Vulnerable groups, including women, children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities, face intersecting disadvantages that heighten their risk of deprivation. These vulnerabilities manifest in poor health outcomes, low educational attainment, high dependency ratios, and increased rural–urban migration, further weakening rural communities (UNDP, 2023).

In Nigeria, poverty remains a critical socio-economic challenge affecting millions across regions. Over 40% of Nigerians live below the national poverty line, with many unable to afford basic necessities such as food, education, and healthcare (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; World Poverty Clock, 2018; Adebayo, 2018). Poverty in Nigeria is multidimensional, encompassing economic, social, political, and environmental factors, including unemployment, low income, poor access to social services, weak governance, and vulnerability to climate and environmental shocks (Chinwe et al., 2022).

Hence, understanding the nature, causes, and consequences of poverty in rural areas is crucial for designing effective interventions. This study therefore focuses on poverty and the plights of the rural populace in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State, aiming to generate insights that can inform policies and strategies to alleviate deprivation, enhance rural livelihoods, and promote sustainable development.

Theoretical Framework

Karl Marx's conflict perspective explains rural poverty as a structural consequence of unequal economic relations under capitalism. Society is divided into classes based on ownership of the means of production: the dominant class (bourgeoisie) controls land, capital, and resources, while rural dwellers, peasants and agricultural laborers, belong to the subordinate class (proletariat). Poverty among rural populations is therefore a result of exploitation, as surplus value generated from their labor is appropriated by landlords, merchants, and agribusiness elites (Marx, 1867).

Capitalist expansion leads to land dispossession, commercialization of agriculture, and wealth concentration, marginalizing small-scale farmers and disrupting traditional subsistence systems. Rural populations are often forced into precarious wage labor with low incomes and limited access to social

services. The state frequently reinforces these inequalities by enacting policies that favor elite interests, contributing to persistent rural deprivation.

In the Nigerian context, poverty reflects domination by a small wealthy elite that controls the economy, politics, and legal institutions. The working majority owns only their labor, receives inadequate wages, and faces exploitation and marginalization. The ruling class also shapes policies and governance to protect its interests, often using the poor in political and religious conflicts, thereby perpetuating their vulnerability and deprivation.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to enhance the depth and reliability of the findings. A survey method was used to collect quantitative data from a sample of 170 respondents drawn from Kaugama Local Government Area. For the qualitative component, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with three traditional leaders and two political office holders, selected through purposive sampling based on their relevance and knowledge of the study issues.

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed for the survey. In the first stage, Kaugama Local Government Area was stratified based on its political wards. Five wards, Kaugama, Ubba, Dakaiyawa, Unguwan Jibrin, and Girbobo were selected using a simple random (lottery) method and treated as clusters. In the second stage, two streets were randomly selected from each ward, resulting in a total of ten streets. At the final stage, seventeen respondents were selected from each street using **systematic random** sampling, yielding the required sample size.

Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and tables with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data from the IDIs were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for systematic interpretation of major themes. This approach ensured rigor, credibility, and trustworthiness in the qualitative findings.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 The Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 The Socio-Economic and Demographic Characteristics

Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	86	51.8
Female	80	48.2

Total	**166**	**100.0**
Years	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18-27	75	45.2
28-37	53	31.9
38-47	23	13.9
48 and above	15	9.0
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Marital status	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Single	70	42.2
Married	70	42.2
Divorce	19	11.4
Widowed	7	4.2
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Educational Attainment	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Non formal	67	40.4
Primary	13	7.8
Secondary	59	35.5
Tertiary	27	16.3
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Occupation	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Farmer	53	31.9
Trader	45	27.1
Civil servants	22	13.3
Students	36	21.7
Others (specify)	10	6.0
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Ethnic group	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Hausa	77	46.4

Fulani	74	44.6
Barebaris	11	6.6
Others	4	2.4
Total	**166**	**100.0**
Daily income	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Less than N500	34	20.5
N500-N1000	53	31.9
N1001-N1,500	39	23.5
Above N1501	40	24.1
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The table indicates that a slight majority of the respondents were male (51.8%), while 48.2% were female. This gender distribution suggests male dominance among respondents, which can be attributed to the socio-cultural structure of the study area, where men are typically recognized as heads of households. Additionally, cultural and religious practices, particularly the observance of *purdah* among women in line with Islamic teachings, limit female visibility and participation in public interactions, thereby affecting their representation in the study.

With respect to age distribution, the findings reveal that the largest proportion of respondents (45.9%) fell within the 18–27 years age group, followed by 31.9% aged 28–37 years. Respondents aged 38–47 years accounted for 13.9%, while those aged 48 years and above constituted 9.0%. This indicates that the majority of respondents were within the economically active youth population (18–37 years), a group that is particularly vulnerable to poverty due to unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to productive resources.

Regarding marital status, the results show that 42.2% of the respondents were single, while an equal proportion (42.2%) were married. In contrast, 11.4% were divorced and 4.2% were widowed. This pattern suggests that single and married individuals are more exposed to poverty-related challenges, as they often bear greater economic responsibilities, including household maintenance and dependents, compared to divorced and widowed individuals.

In terms of educational attainment, the findings indicate that 40.4% of the respondents had non-formal education, primarily Qur'anic education, while 7.8% possessed a primary school leaving certificate. Those with secondary education accounted for 35.5%, and only 16.3% had attained tertiary education

(including Diploma, NCE, or Degree). This distribution reflects limited access to formal education beyond the basic level, largely due to financial constraints, poor academic performance in SSCE examinations, and the community's preference for Islamic education, given its predominantly Muslim population. Low educational attainment among respondents has significant implications for employment opportunities and income generation.

Occupationally, the majority of respondents (31.9%) were farmers, followed by 27.1% who were engaged in trading. Civil servants constituted 13.3%, while 21.7% were students; others identified as housewives. This occupational structure underscores the agrarian nature of the study area and suggests a heavy reliance on subsistence farming, which is often associated with low income and high vulnerability to poverty.

The ethnic composition of respondents shows that 46.4% were Hausa, 44.6% were Fulani, 6.6% were Babarbare, and 2.4% belonged to other ethnic groups, including Yoruba and Igbo residents. This confirms that the study area is predominantly inhabited by Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups.

Finally, the income distribution reveals that 20.5% of the respondents lived on less than ₦500 per day, while 31.9% earned between ₦500 and ₦1,000 daily. Respondents earning between ₦1,001 and ₦1,500 accounted for 23.5%, whereas 24.1% earned above ₦1,500 per day. These findings indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents live below or close to the international poverty line.

4.2 Respondents View on the Nature of Poverty in Kaugama L.G.A.

Table 2 Respondents Knowledge about the Existence of Poverty in Kaugama

Poverty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	150	90.4
No	16	9.6
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The table indicates that 90.4% of respondents in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State are aware of the existence of poverty within their community, while only 9.6% reported no awareness of its presence. This suggests a high level of collective consciousness regarding poverty among community members. The predominance of this awareness may be attributed to widespread socio-economic deprivation, unemployment, and limited access to basic necessities of life, which are directly experienced by residents.

This quantitative finding is further reinforced by qualitative evidence from the in-depth interviews. As one traditional leader explained:

> "I am aware of the existence of poverty in my community, and this is due to the lack of economic diversification, as we mainly depend on seasonal agriculture" (IDI, Bulama, 2024).

The convergence of survey data and interview responses underscores the pervasiveness of poverty in Kaugama and highlights structural economic factors as key contributors to its persistence.

Table 3 Respondents Understanding of poverty in Kaugama

Understanding of poverty	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of basic necessities of life	98	59.0
Deprivation	35	21.1
Unequal accessibility to human needs	33	19.9
Total	**166**	**100.0**

The table indicates that 98 respondents (59.0%) conceptualized poverty primarily as the lack of basic necessities of life within their community. In contrast, 35 respondents (21.1%) associated poverty with deprivation, while 33 respondents (19.9%) understood poverty in terms of unequal access to essential human needs. This distribution suggests that the dominant perception of poverty among respondents is anchored in material deprivation, particularly the absence of fundamental needs such as adequate food, shelter, clothing, accessible roads, health facilities, and safe drinking water. Further analysis shows that 21.1% of respondents viewed poverty through the lens of broader socio-economic deprivation, including landlessness, political powerlessness, limited market access, and income inequality. Meanwhile, 19.9% emphasized unequal access to human development opportunities, notably education, business opportunities, and human capital development. These findings underscore the multidimensional nature of poverty in Kaugama Local Government Area. The quantitative results are corroborated by qualitative evidence from in-depth interviews. A political office holder explained that poverty in the area is characterized by deficits in education, basic infrastructure, adequate nutrition, and employment opportunities for youths:

> "I can describe my understanding of poverty as lack of education and basic necessities of life, such as water, adequate nutritious food for the populace, and lack of gainful employment for the youth" (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Similarly, a traditional leader (Bulama) described poverty in Kaugama as relative rather than absolute, noting that many residents engage in various forms of economic activities:

> "The nature of poverty in Kaugama is somehow moderate and relative because most people are engaged in business activities in one way or the other" (IDI, Bulama, 2024).

Another Bulama reinforced this view by highlighting agricultural engagement as a mitigating factor:

> "Kaugama is affected mainly by relative poverty because our people are engaged in both seasonal and irrigation farming" (IDI, Bulama, 2024).

However, contrasting perspectives also emerged. A political office holder described poverty in some households as absolute, citing extremely low income levels:

> "We can describe poverty in Kaugama as absolute, because you can find a household head living below ₦200 per day" (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Additionally, interviewees acknowledged recent improvements in infrastructure and social services, including road construction, healthcare facilities, water supply, and educational infrastructure. Nevertheless, concerns were raised regarding sustainability and maintenance:

> "In the last seven years, there have been improvements in roads, healthcare facilities, pipe-borne water, and schools. However, the major challenge is the maintenance of these facilities, particularly electricity and water supply. For instance, Elleman/Dakaiyawa town experienced a month-long power outage due to lack of funds for maintenance" (IDI, Political and Traditional Leaders, 2024).

Hence, the findings reveal that poverty in Kaugama is multifaceted, encompassing both absolute and relative dimensions, shaped by material deprivation, unequal access to opportunities, and challenges in sustaining development gains.

4.3 Respondents View on the Causes of Poverty in Kaugama L.G.A.

Table 4 respondents view on the Causes of Poverty in their Community

Causes of poverty	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Unemployment	124 (74.7)	42 (25.3)	**166 (100.0)**
Illiteracy	87 (52.4)	79 (47.6)	**166 (100.0)**
Infertility of the land	56 (33.7)	110 (66.3)	**166 (100.0)**
Corruption	94 (56.6)	72 (43.4)	**166 (100.0)**

Table 16 indicates that respondents clearly recognize the multidimensional causes of poverty within their community. Unemployment was identified by 74.7% of respondents as a major cause of poverty, while 52.4% attributed poverty to illiteracy. In addition, 33.7% identified land infertility as a contributing factor, and a majority (56.6%) perceived corruption as a central driver of poverty. These findings suggest that poverty in the community is largely driven by structural and socio-economic

deprivations, including political powerlessness, limited access to markets, and pronounced income inequality. The analysis further implies that poverty disproportionately affects unemployed individuals, largely due to limited educational attainment, lack of capital, and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This quantitative evidence is reinforced by qualitative data from the in-depth interviews. For instance, one respondent noted:

> "The major causes of poverty are illiteracy, lack of proper socialization, and joblessness. Our youth depend mainly on farming as their major occupation, using local technology" (IDI, Garkuwa, 2024).

Similarly, another interviewee emphasized the broader developmental context, observing that illiteracy and inadequate educational opportunities are common challenges in developing countries. In Nigeria, public schools are often poorly funded, limiting human capital development. Consequently, individuals without education struggle to access income-generating opportunities, while many poor households prioritize short-term survival over schooling. In addition, limited employment opportunities and high unemployment rates exacerbate poverty levels. This view was further supported by another respondent, who stated:

> "The major cause of poverty in my community is unemployment due to excessive dependence on agriculture" (IDI, Bulama, 2024).

From a governance perspective, an interview with a political office holder highlighted the structural nature of poverty, noting that:

> "Poverty generally results from deprivation, such as unequal access to basic human needs" (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Drawing from the qualitative findings, it can be deduced that poverty in the community is closely linked to income inequality, lack of productive assets, and limited livelihood diversification. In rural areas, wealth and social status are largely derived from land ownership; however, disadvantaged households are typically land-poor. Even where land is available, it is often unproductive or located outside irrigated areas. Due to insufficient income and restricted access to resources, poor households are unable to improve land productivity, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty.

4.4 The Consequences of Poverty in Kaugama L.G.A.

Table 5 Respondent's View on the Consequences of Poverty in Kaugama

Consequences of Poverty	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
Violence	104 (62.7)	62 (37.3)	**166 (100.0)**
Prostitution	97 (58.4)	69 (41.6)	**166 (100.0)**
Homelessness	112 (67.5)	54 (32.5)	**166 (100.0)**
Crime	92 (55.4)	74 (44.6)	**166 (100.0)**

High rate of infectious diseases	85 (51.2)	81 (48.8)	**166 (100.0)**
Malnutrition and starvation	121 (72.9)	45 (27.1)	**166 (100.0)**

The table presents respondents' perceptions of the consequences of poverty in the study area. The findings indicate that poverty manifests in multiple and interrelated social problems. A majority of respondents identified malnutrition as a major consequence (72.9%), followed by homelessness (67.5%), violence (62.7%), prostitution (58.4%), crime (55.4%), and a high prevalence of infectious diseases (51.2%). These results suggest that the consequences of poverty are multidimensional and multifaceted, affecting social stability, health outcomes, and overall well-being, particularly among youths and other vulnerable groups.

The data further imply that poverty increases youths' involvement in violent activities and criminal behavior, while economic deprivation exposes many young women to prostitution as a survival strategy. Poverty-induced homelessness is also widespread, with many individuals living in precarious housing conditions or relying on temporary accommodation with relatives and friends, often described as the hidden homeless. In addition, poverty contributes to street begging and other informal survival practices within the community.

Health-related consequences of poverty are equally evident. Respondents associated poverty with the spread of infectious diseases, largely due to poor living conditions, limited access to healthcare services, inadequate sanitation, and low levels of health education. The situation is further compounded by shortages of medical personnel, essential drugs, and affordable treatment, making healthcare largely inaccessible to the poor. Moreover, poverty was found to be closely linked to hunger, starvation, and malnutrition, arising from unequal access to basic human needs, unsafe drinking water, and the lack of nutritious and hygienic food. These quantitative findings are strongly supported by the qualitative data from in-depth interviews (IDIs). A political office holder noted that

> *"poverty causes violence and vandalisation of properties, particularly during elections"* (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Another interviewee corroborated this view, stating that

> *"poverty has a great effect on women, as it pushes many of them into prostitution"* (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Similarly, an IDI respondent observed that

> *"poverty leads to homelessness, especially among vulnerable groups, and contributes to crime, stealing, and other social vices in Kaugama"* (IDI, Political Office Holder, 2024).

Another respondent emphasized the health implications, noting that

> *"poverty results in the emergence and spread of infectious diseases and exposes many people to malnutrition and starvation due to lack of healthy food and unsafe drinking water"* (IDI, Garkuwa, 2024).

The qualitative evidence reinforces the quantitative results, demonstrating that high levels of poverty significantly constrain households' ability to access adequate and nutritious diets. As a result, many residents rely on inexpensive, calorie-dense foods high in fats, sugar, and salt, which increases vulnerability to obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and other health-related conditions. This underscores the profound and interconnected social and health consequences of poverty in Kaugama.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings on the nature of poverty reveal that poverty in Kaugama Local Government Area is multidimensional, characterized by the lack of basic necessities of life, deprivation, and unequal access to essential human needs such as food, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The study further shows that inadequate healthcare facilities, poor road networks, and limited social services significantly worsen the living conditions of rural households. Many households experience chronic income insufficiency, making it difficult to meet basic needs, a situation largely driven by limited employment opportunities, lack of economic diversification, restricted access to credit facilities and poverty alleviation programmes, inadequate agricultural extension services, and poor market access for farm produce. In contrast, urban areas offer relatively better employment opportunities, thereby reinforcing rural–urban disparities and deepening rural poverty, particularly among farming households.

These findings are consistent with the study by Hussaini and Muhammad (2018), who observed that poor households significantly outnumber non-poor households and that poverty in rural communities is largely chronic rather than transient. They further identified age, household size, gender, years of schooling, and engagement in non-farm activities as key determinants of poverty status. Similarly, Balogun et al. (2021) and Jibrin et al. (2024) report that Jigawa State records one of the highest poverty incidences in Nigeria, with a substantial proportion of its population living below the poverty line. The state's heavy dependence on rain-fed agriculture, coupled with outdated farming techniques and climate variability, has constrained productivity and income generation.

Moreover, rural communities such as Kaugama face persistent challenges related to limited access to quality education, healthcare services, potable water, and other basic amenities. These challenges are further exacerbated by weak infrastructure, including poor road networks and unreliable electricity

supply, which restrict economic activities and access to markets. This evidence suggests that poverty in Jigawa State is multidimensional, affecting income, health, education, and living standards simultaneously. Supporting this view, Eze (2007) argues that poverty in Nigeria is deep, pervasive, and increasing at an alarming rate, with a large proportion of the population living in absolute poverty. The findings of the study indicate that poverty in Kaugama Local Government Area is driven by multiple interrelated factors, including **unemployment, illiteracy, corruption, low agricultural productivity due to land infertility**, and a **lack of economic diversification**, as the majority of residents depend almost exclusively on subsistence agriculture. This pattern reflects the structural weaknesses of rural economies in Nigeria, where limited non-farm opportunities constrain income generation and perpetuate chronic poverty.

These findings are consistent with the arguments of **Glaeser, Scheinkman, and Shleifer (2003)** and **Acemoglu and Robinson (2013)**, who contend that rising income inequality enables economic elites to capture political, administrative, and judicial institutions. The wealthy, having more resources and greater stakes in preserving unequal systems, often influence law-making processes through legal lobbying, political financing, or illicit practices such as bribery. Such elite domination reinforces corruption and weak governance, which in turn exacerbate poverty and marginalization among rural populations.

Furthermore, evidence from the **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2008; 2020)** demonstrates that rural areas in Nigeria experience significantly higher poverty incidence and deprivation than urban centers. Urban residence is associated with lower poverty risk due to better access to basic infrastructure and social services, including electricity, potable water, sanitation, healthcare, and educational facilities. The persistent neglect of rural development thus deepens spatial inequality and sustains rural poverty in areas such as Kaugama.

In addition, **Gaffar (2007)** observes that poverty is closely linked to the absence of productive assets, low educational attainment, and inadequate employment opportunities—conditions that are prevalent in rural Jigawa State. The study further reveals that the consequences of poverty in Kaugama are far-reaching, manifesting in **malnutrition, starvation, high prevalence of infectious diseases, rising crime rates, homelessness, prostitution, and various forms of social violence**. These outcomes underscore the severe human and social costs of rural poverty.

This finding aligns with earlier studies by **Oladipo (1999)**, **Oriahi et al. (2010)**, **Wright (2007)**, and **Jibrin et al. (2024)**, which collectively argue that poverty leads to human degradation, social disintegration, and widespread housing inadequacy. Conversely, **Nnadi (2008)** emphasizes that

poverty generates profound socio-economic challenges, including inequality, the emergence of a marginalized underclass, and low levels of national development. He further asserts that globalization has negatively affected Nigeria's economic growth through declining foreign direct investment and argues that meaningful reductions in unemployment, poverty, and inequality require fundamental reforms in Nigeria's economic and social policies.

CONCLUSION

This study examined **poverty and the plight of the rural populace** in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State. The findings conceptualize poverty as a **multidimensional phenomenon**, characterized not only by income deprivation but also by the lack of basic necessities of life, social exclusion, and unequal access to essential human needs such as education, healthcare, and productive resources. The study concludes that a significant proportion of rural households in Kaugama experience **chronic income insufficiency**, limiting their ability to meet basic subsistence requirements. This condition is further exacerbated by **limited employment opportunities, weak economic diversification, and structural constraints** within the rural economy. Additionally, rural vulnerability to poverty is intensified by restricted access to credit facilities, inadequate agricultural extension services, poor market linkages, unemployment, illiteracy, and declining soil fertility. These interrelated factors contribute to severe socio-economic consequences, including malnutrition and food insecurity, high prevalence of infectious diseases, increased crime rates, homelessness, prostitution, and various forms of social violence.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to effectively address poverty and the associated plights of the rural populace in Kaugama Local Government Area of Jigawa State. These recommendations are aimed at informing policy formulation, guiding development interventions, and improving the socio-economic conditions of rural residents.

1. The Jigawa State Government, in collaboration with Kaugama Local Government, should promote rural economic diversification by supporting agro-processing, small-scale enterprises, and vocational skills development. This will expand employment opportunities beyond subsistence farming, increase household incomes, and reduce chronic income insufficiency among rural households.
2. Accessible and affordable rural credit schemes should be established for smallholder farmers and rural entrepreneurs, alongside the revitalization of agricultural extension services.

Emphasis should be placed on modern farming techniques, soil fertility management, and climate-resilient practices to enhance productivity, food security, and income sustainability.

3. Investment in rural education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure (such as roads, water supply, and sanitation) should be prioritized to address social exclusion and unequal access to essential services. Adult literacy programs and community health interventions will improve human capital, reduce vulnerability to disease and crime, and enhance the overall well-being of the rural populace.

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